

# 2010 Annual Report to the Community

Quality Compassionate Care  
Every Veteran, Every Day



Tomah VA Medical Center



Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

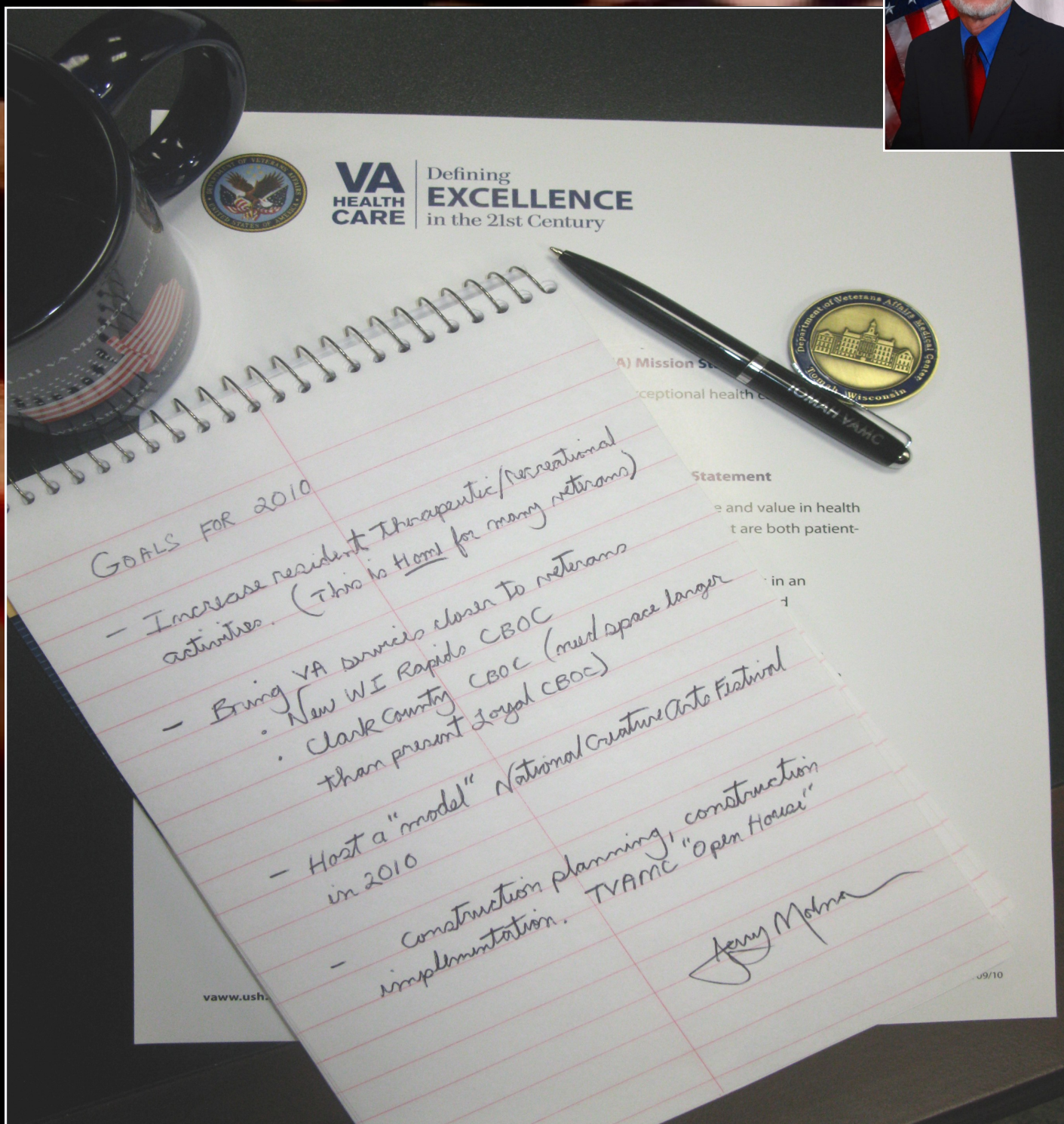
*to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and*

Dear Partners,

In 2010, the Tomah VA Medical Center made great strides in ensuring Veterans receive the best in quality and compassionate care. Veterans are the center of everything we do and I thank you for your continued partnership and unwavering dedication in helping us fulfill our noble mission – to serve Veterans. This partnership has always been a united effort between employees, volunteers and families.

We look forward to a new year of enhancing services, meeting challenges, building partnerships and exceeding the needs of our Veterans.

I am pleased to present you with the 2010 *Report to the Community*.





# Tomah VA Medical Center

## Quality, Compassionate Care Every Veteran, Every Day



**2010 Budget**  
**\$125 Million**

**Veterans  
Enrolled**  
**24,358**

**Total Outpatient  
Visits**  
**179,614**

**# of Employees**  
**1080**

**Annual  
Donations**  
**\$854,671.55**

**Volunteer Hours**  
**34,356**

**Construction  
Budget**  
**\$11 Million**

**Economic  
Impact**  
**\$208 Million**

### Hospital Accreditations



**cap**

**carf** INTERNATIONAL

# Professional Profile - Recreation/Creative Arts Therapy

## Improving Veteran's lives: Mind, Body and Spirit



Modern medical advances have increased the survival rate of our men and women in uniform who sustain injuries while serving our country. But they can be left with serious and complex wounds. Recreational therapy is a critical component of the rehabilitative regimen because it allows Veterans to be active by engaging in their favorite sports and recreational activities, while simultaneously healing the mental and physical wounds of war. Public Affairs Officer James Theres sat down with Recreation Therapy Supervisor, Jenna Gilbertson, to discuss the impact of this therapy on Veteran's lives.

PAO: How does a Recreation/Creative Arts Therapist impact a Veteran's life?

JG: We hope through our support we can help provide purpose and quality of life. Depending on the barriers that exist in a Veteran's life, we look for opportunities to overcome those obstacles and achieve a higher level of wellness.

PAO: Give me an example.

JG: Well, take today. We organized a March Madness Basketball Skills contest in the Gymnasium for Veterans and employees. If you notice, we set up a floor level basketball hoop (*see photo on right*) for Veterans in wheelchairs so they could participate. It might seem like a small thing, but imagine the disappointment a Veteran would feel if they came over to play and the only baskets available were 10 feet high. It would be demoralizing. We adapt or modify what might seem impossible to them and make it possible.

PAO: Interesting. So by taking a look outside the box...

JG: Yes, exactly. Through evaluations and assessments we set goals and objectives for Veterans, implement structured interventions, establish individual recovery plans and provide the tools they need to continue or expand their interests. Sometimes it's as simple as providing a magnifying glass to read a favorite book or magazine or can be as complex as teaching a Veteran to use an adaptive golf cart, ball, club and tee.

PAO: How many Recreation/Creative Arts Staff are there at Tomah?

JG: We have five certified therapeutic recreation specialists (C.T.R.S), one recreation management therapist, one board certified music therapist, three recreation assistants, one recreation aid and one part-time craft care specialist through Help Hospitalized Veterans. A C.T.R.S has a four year degree and passes a national exam.

PAO: What's the favorite part of your job?

JG: It may sound cliché, but just getting a simple smile from a Veteran knowing that in some small way we have had a positive impact on their time here.



TOMAH VA MEDICAL CENTER COURTYARD MASTER PLAN



Plans are underway to renovate the **inner courtyard** to improve Veterans quality of life. Some of the new features include:

- ◆ Walking path
- ◆ Outdoor fitness stations
- ◆ Outdoor dining area & outdoor kitchen
- ◆ Stage for special events
- ◆ Mini golf
- ◆ Labyrinth
- ◆ Gazebos
- ◆ Outdoor games
- ◆ Outdoor rehab training area
- ◆ Memory Garden
- ◆ Outdoor gardens and seating areas
- ◆ Attendant area to check out games, golf clubs, golf driving net, water feature.

**Want to become involved with the courtyard project, please visit the Tomah VA website [www.tomah.va.gov](http://www.tomah.va.gov) or call Voluntary Service (608) 372-1727.**



# Recovery, Wellness, Rehabilitation, Quality of Life

*Quality of Life*



Opportunities for all levels of ability

*Independence*



Adaptive golf cart, tee, club and ball

*Health*



Veteran enjoys riding wheel hand cycle, a lifelong leisure pursuit

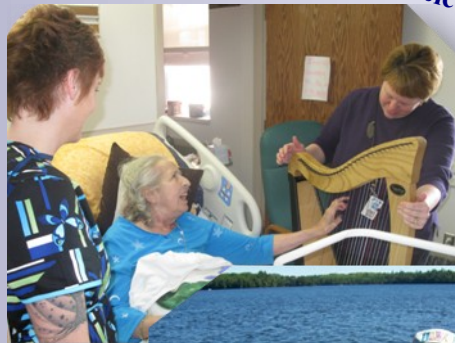
*Rehabilitation*

*Higher Level of Wellness*



Prom night for the Veterans & Families

*Therapeutic Interventions*



*Music Therapy*



Look at the size of that weed Bass !  
Camp American Legion

*Recovery*



Artists for the Humanities

*Non-invasive Techniques*

*Non-threatening Environment*



Country Inn Monthly Newsletter  
Veterans writing group

*Growth*



Sports Center Veteran  
learns how to use a Nook

*Therapeutic Interventions*



Aroma Therapy  
"I sleep like a Baby"





# NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL



## Our Journey...



- ◆ Accepting the baton in Texas
- ◆ Six months of Fund Raising
- ◆ Moving day at the Radisson
- ◆ Veteran Check-in



- ◆ Volunteers make it happen!
- ◆ Mississippi River excursion
- ◆ Dress rehearsal
- ◆ Art Show
- ◆ Live Stage Performance





**Native American Flute made by  
Albert Gray Eagle**



Jerald D. Molnar  
Director, Tomah VA Medical Center  
Tomah, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Molnar,

Nearly five weeks have passed since the Sunday evening banquet that brought to a close one of the most fantastic weeks of my seventy-seven years. This was my first try at entering a Veterans Creative Arts competition. In fact, I had not even heard of the competition until about 2 ½ years ago when another "Vet," a truly great artist, told me about it and encouraged me to enter. Well, I did and the rest is history.

Mr. Molnar, I did not really know what to expect at such a "festival." I was, and remain, overwhelmed by the experience! Can you imagine a person being deeply proud of an accomplishment yet deeply humbled by its acceptance at the same time? To have my work be judged good enough to be gold medal material indeed made me feel very proud. To be included among the 109 "Vets" that were gathered together in La Crosse, Wisconsin was for this Vet a deeply humbling experience!

When I think of the logistics of the event, the planning, the ordering and receiving, the storing of goods, the checking and re-checking and the wonderful heart-felt thinking up of ideas to please and honor a group of ordinary American people who are Veterans, I cannot imagine the cost of such an event. Why that glorious display of fireworks alone must have cost many thousands of dollars. All of that to honor one hundred and nine Veterans. Mr. Molnar, this Vet still gets choked up just thinking about it. Also, sir, all of those precious volunteers, talk about great Americans, they are the greatest!!

As I sit here this Saturday evening after Thanksgiving Day reflecting on a marvelous chain of events, I am grateful for all the dedicated folks that made the 2010 festival possible.

--Letter received from a Veteran dated November 27, 2010





## Tomah VA Completes \$2.6 million Medical Imaging Renovation



A major renovation to Building 400 now offers area Veterans with medical imaging (X-ray, Computed Tomography) services on-site. The renovation includes \$1.5 million in state-of-the-art medical imaging equipment and \$1.1 million in construction. Magnetic Resonating Imagery (MRI) services to Veterans are provided on Fridays. Prior to completion of the project, Veterans requiring medical imaging services routinely traveled to the VA hospital in Madison, WI. In addition to the reduction of travel time for Veterans, several other factors contributed to the capital expenditure intended to improve the quality and value of patient care delivery:

- ◆ Same day access 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- ◆ Reduce back log at other facilities within the region.
- ◆ Offer more services for high risk patients such as virtual colonoscopy.

## Ability Gym Rehabilitation Clinic Renovation and Expansion-BLDG. 402



The Rehabilitation Clinic Renovation and Expansion is a \$1.6 million project ***funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009***. With the changing Veteran population and advancement in rehabilitation technology, an integrated rehabilitation center will provide Veterans state of the art rehabilitation services. Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Kinesiotherapy and Speech Language Pathology staff will be integrated to allow increased collaboration in patient care delivery. The integrated rehabilitation gym will be called the Ability Gym. Highlights of the Ability Gym include:

- ◆ a rehabilitation kitchen and bathroom,
- ◆ fitness machines,
- ◆ overhead support system for safety during walking, stairs training and functional movement, balance training including “wii-hab.”

Private evaluation rooms have been created, allowing for greater privacy, and a patient education room will offer classes and patient support. Future plans also include the development of recreational and functional outdoor courtyard.





### **VA Clinic Opens in Wisconsin Rapids**

On April 1, 2010, the Wisconsin Rapids VA clinic re-opened fully staffed with VA employees. Since 2003, primary care services for Veterans enrolled at the clinic were provided by two contracted medical providers. The transition to a clinic fully staffed with VA employees was critical in order to expand services. The 8500 square foot clinic will provide primary medical care and behavioral health care services to Veterans and within the first year, Audiology, Nutritional Care, Tele-medicine, Social Work and Women's Health services will be added.

*An Open House was held on May 25, 2010.*



### **VA to build new clinic in Clark County**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in Tomah broke ground on February 14, 2011 on a new 3100 square foot Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Clark County. The new clinic will be located in Owen, Wisconsin along the Highway 29 corridor that connects Wausau, Wisconsin and Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. The clinic will provide Primary Care, Lab Services, Tele-MOVE, Mental Health Services, Women's Health services, enrollment and registration and other group classes.

*The project will be completed in August 2011.*

## **Two Extraordinary Achievements in 2010**



Nursing Assistant Rebecca Knutson, shown here with VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, won the 2010 Secretary's Award for Nursing Excellence.



DAV Volunteer Jim Cornell reached the 100,000 mile mark taking Veterans to their appointments. He began volunteering in 1991.

### **Tomah VA receives \$563,000 of Emergency Management funds**



The Tomah VA Medical Center was awarded \$563,000 from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) for several essential Emergency Management projects and equipment. VHA is responsible for coordinating and providing healthcare for all enrolled Veterans and manages one of the largest healthcare systems in the world sharing responsibility for the VA's mission with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). According to Steve Amling, Emergency Management Coordinator for the Tomah VA, the projects funded include:

**\$220, 000** for replacement of the chain link fencing on three sides of the Medical Center.

**\$160,000** for the erection of fencing and gates along East Veterans Street in front of the Medical Center to help control access and secure the perimeter in case of an emergency.

**\$150,000** for the erection of a 150' X 50' storage facility to warehouse critical emergency equipment used during weather related emergencies.

**\$33,000** for emergency management equipment to include protective suits for the VA Fire and Police departments, new firearms for the VA Police department and "Go Bags" for VA Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (DEMPS) volunteers.

### **Urgent Care Renovation and Expansion-BLDG. 400**



The Urgent Care Renovation and Expansion is a \$1.6 million dollar project ***funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009***. The project began construction in June 2010 with an expected completion date of May 2011. The new Urgent Care will have four exam rooms and one mental health room. The mental health room will provide patients with quicker access to care. All exam rooms will have state-of-the art equipment and glass doors to afford closer observation. A new ambulance bay will be constructed to protect Veterans requiring transport in and in and out of the Medical Center. The waiting room will be expanded to better accommodate Veterans and their families. The Tomah VA Urgent Care is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for Veterans who have an injury or illness that requires immediate care, but is not serious enough to warrant a visit to an Emergency Room.

### **Mental Health Living Quarters Renovation-BLDG. 403**



The Mental Health Living Quarters Renovation is an \$8.8 million project incorporating the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) model. The overall vision for the PACT concept requires interdisciplinary teamwork, individual professionalism and collaboration. The goal is to provide Veteran-centered inpatient care focusing on the highest quality of life. Some of the features of the renovation include therapeutic spa rooms, kitchenettes, community day rooms with extended windows to accommodate Veterans in wheelchairs and an elevator that will lead to the John A. Anderson Memory Garden which was dedicated on September 18, 1997.

**403A-** Will be a 5 bed acute care psychiatric unit providing 24-hour structured inpatient treatment within a controlled setting. Treatment emphasis is on short term, intense therapeutic intervention designed to provide rapid evaluation and stabilization.

**403N-**Will be a 21 bed-patient unit with the goal of improving overall functioning of inpatients and ultimately transitioning Veterans back into the community.



# 2010 Special Events



## Veterans inducted into Hall of Heroes



**Peter Wirth Jr.** was an 18 year old Marine when he received a Navy Cross and Purple Heart for extraordinary heroism while serving with a Marine rifle company on the island of Okinawa Shima, Ryukhu Islands on June 2, 1945. Private First Class Wirth voluntarily went forward to destroy two enemy machine guns that were causing heavy casualties. The Battle of Okinawa was the largest amphibious assault of the Pacific War and lasted eighty-two days. The battle has been referred to as the "Typhoon of Steel" because of the ferocity of the fighting, the intensity of the gunfire and the sheer numbers of combatants involved. Mr. Wirth is from Spring Grove Minnesota and receives his care at the La Crosse Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

Marine **Leonard Jasinski** received two Bronze Stars (one with "V" device) and a Purple Heart for heroic achievement in connection with combat operations while serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division near Oi-jong-bu, South Korea and Sudong, North Korea. Private First Class Jasinski served in China and Pearl Harbor in 1948 and participated in the following campaigns during the Korean War: Capture and securing of Seoul, Korea and the Wonsan-Hungnam-Chosin Campaign in North Korea. Mr. Jasinski passed away at the Tomah VA Medical Center in 2010.



### VA River Valley Medical Clinic (LaCrosse)

2600 State Road LaCrosse, WI 54601

**Phone:** 608 784-3886 or 608 784-0345 or 608 787-5006

**Fax:** 608 784-0262

**Clinic hours:** Mon. - Fri., 8:00am - 4:30pm

### VA River Valley Integrated Health Center (LaCrosse)

1525 Losey Blvd south LaCrosse, WI 54601

**Phone:** 608 787-6411

**Fax:** 608 787-6414

**Clinic hours:** Mon. - Thur., 7:30am - 6:30pm Fri., 7:30am - 4:30pm

### Loyal Clinic

141 N. Main Street Loyal, WI 54446

**Phone:** 715 255-9799

**Fax:** 715 255-8618

**Clinic hours:** Tues - Thurs., 8:00am - 4:30pm

### Wausau Clinic

515 South 32nd Ave., Wausau WI 54401

**Phone:** 715 842-2834

**Fax:** 715 845-8211

**Clinic hours:** Mon. - Fri., 8:00am - 4:30pm

### Wisconsin Rapids Clinic

555 West Grand Ave., Wisconsin Rapids WI 54495

**Phone:** 715 424-4682

**Fax:** 715 424-4614

**Clinic hours:** Mon.- Fri., 8:30am - 5:00pm



Tomah VA Medical Center publishes this Annual Report for the Veterans, employees, volunteers and friends of the Western Central Wisconsin Service Area. For questions and comments on this publication's content, contact **James Theres** at **608-372-7759** or e-mail **james.theres@va.gov**.



Tomah VA Medical Center is part of the VISN 12 Great Lakes Healthcare System.  
**Jerald Molnar**, Medical Center Director  
**Sandra Gregar**, Associate Director  
**David Houlihan**, MD, Chief of Staff  
**Lynda Everson**, RN, MS, Acting Associate Director of Patient Care Services

**Tomah VA Medical Center**  
500 E. Veterans Street Tomah Wisconsin 54660  
[www.tomah.va.gov](http://www.tomah.va.gov)  
[www.facebook.com/tomahvamec2](https://www.facebook.com/tomahvamec2)